

Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Markup of H.R. 8, “The North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act of 2015,”
and H.R. 3242, the Child Nicotine Poisoning Prevention Act, and Reconciliation Package”
September 29, 2015

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Today, we commence our full committee markup of our Architecture of Abundance plan, a reconciliation package, and bipartisan legislation to prevent child nicotine poisoning.

H.R. 8, the “North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act,” is the culmination of a multi-year, multi-Congress effort to fulfill our energy potential. We have prioritized creating jobs and improving our infrastructure to ensure affordable energy continues to flow to folks in Michigan and across the country. And while it has been difficult to find bipartisan consensus on as many fronts as I would have liked, I believe we have written a substantive, thoughtful bill.

This is our first attempt at significant energy legislation since 2007 and a great deal has changed in less than a decade. Fears of America running out of energy have been replaced by a once incomprehensible rise in domestic oil and natural gas production. But our laws and regulations need to be updated in order to reflect this new reality.

H.R. 8 presents a unique opportunity to fortify our energy security by reinvesting in the SPR, by hardening and modernizing our nation’s energy infrastructure to withstand 21st century threats like cyber, severe weather, and EMP attacks – we do this while also putting folks back to work. This bill also would help America reap the global benefits of our energy abundance by streamlining the approval of LNG exports and by providing improved coordination on energy diplomacy issues with our North American neighbors. In addition, there are provisions to reduce energy use by the federal government and make targeted improvements to some of our energy efficiency standards and other federal programs. .

I would like to thank everyone on both sides of the aisle for their important contributions to this effort as well as Energy Secretary Moniz. The final version of the bill reflects many conclusions from DOE’s landmark Quadrennial Energy Review. America has the resources to become an energy superpower. All we need is the right laws and regulations to enable that to happen. Our goal remains getting something to the President’s desk that will be signed into law, and tomorrow’s vote will be an important milestone in our effort.

We will also consider reconciliation recommendations per instructions from the House-passed budget. It is our responsibility in Congress to ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly and reflect the priorities of the American people. This committee has been investigating the abortion practices of Planned Parenthood and its affiliates since the release of the first in a series of abhorrent videos. As this investigation moves forward, the flow of taxpayer dollars to abortion providers like Planned Parenthood should stop. It’s a matter of respect for human life. At the same time, in an effort to protect access to health care, we will instead further invest in quality health care options for men and women provided by Community Health Centers.

Also part of our committee recommendations is the repeal of the Prevention and Public Health Fund – a misguided attempt at increasing funding for preventive services. While the goals of the fund are laudable, the execution has been questionable. The funding is over the amount Congress has already authorized and appropriated for these activities. Close to two billion

dollars of tax payer money is given to the Secretary of Health and Human Services every year for the prevention fund and the Secretary can spend the funds as she likes with absolutely no congressional oversight – and it has been treated like a petty cash account. For example, in the past the administration diverted \$453.8 million from the prevention fund for administrative and promotion efforts to enroll individuals in the health care exchanges. Our recommendations save more than \$1 billion taxpayer dollars and reflect a much stronger representation of the priorities of the American people.

Lastly, we will also consider bipartisan legislation to keep kids safe - H.R. 3242, the Child Nicotine Poisoning Prevention Act. Children in Michigan and across the country are at risk as there have already been thousands of reported poisonings related to liquid nicotine among kids. I commend Reps. Brooks and Esty for their work on this important bill.

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